

Dear Members of Aging Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Kathy Null and I am an AARP-CT Advocacy volunteer from Bridgewater. I am providing testimony today to express my support for RAISED BILL No. 6552 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES TO USE THE TECHNOLOGY OF THEIR CHOICE FOR VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS TO FAMILY, FRIENDS AND OTHER PERSONS.

Additionally, I am a Resident Advocate volunteer for the Ombudsman office. We are assigned to nursing homes where there has been determined a need for more observation. The focus of the Ombudsman office is on resident rights. As volunteers, we visit the facility on a weekly basis, sharing observations with our primary contact at the facility, usually the Administrator or Director of Nursing. In addition we provide a written monthly report to our Regional Ombudsman.

Most importantly, we get to know the residents, and upon invitation, will often attend the monthly Resident Council meeting at the facility. We become very aware of the needs of the residents and their concerns. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 has prevented volunteers from our weekly visits over the last year. The Covid-19 situation has also made the public more aware of resident concerns.

Most residents in the facilities I was assigned had resided in the facility for more than a year, many more than a few years. Many residents did not have regular visitors as family resided too far away, often out of state. Former friends were often unable to visit due to their own aging and transportation issues.

While the state assistance providing iPads to Nursing Homes for residents is a step in the right direction, many residents that I observed over the years were not 'computer savvy'. Additionally, they may not be able to physically handle the iPad due to their condition.

After reviewing Raised Bill No. 6552, I support the bill as I believe it provides an opportunity for those resident families who can afford the technology for such virtual monitoring devices to be able to visit and monitor their loved ones. This Bill provides detailed responsibility requirements for both the resident and the facility to protect the privacy of all. For those families and friends who do get the virtual monitoring, it will give them a sense of relief to see their loved ones. And I believe the facility will be sure that all residents receive the best care.

I have often spoken as an AARP volunteer of our human need to age in dignity. I urge the Aging Committee will approve and move this Raised Bill No. 6552 along for legislative approval. Thank you very much for your consideration in this important legislation.